

**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
**GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD  
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519  
(508) 839-5421

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON, MA

2022 FEB 15 AM 8:36

**MINUTES**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
January 11, 2022  
Zoom Online Meeting  
7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Amy Marr, Chair  
Laura Often, Vice Chair  
Liz Spinney, Secretary  
Jennifer Connelly, Member

**Student Representatives:** Annabelle Webber

**Also Present:** James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools  
Kristen Gasper, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order: At 7:00 p.m, Amy Marr called the meeting to order. *Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Grafton School Committee is being conducted via remote participation. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to this meeting while in progress may do so by visiting the zoom link found on the Grafton Public School website. We will need to take attendance and announce all the committee members and school officials on the call. We will have a roll call vote for all votes. Closed captioning has been enabled. The secretary will monitor questions using the Q&A feature.* Introductions: Amy Marr, Chair; Laura Often, Vice Chair; Liz Spinney, Secretary; Jennifer Connelly, Member; James Cummings, Superintendent; Kristen Gasper, Assistant Superintendent; Annabelle Webber, Student Representative; Joanne Stocklin, MSES Principal; Stephen Wiltshire, NSES Principal; Heather Nadeau, SEPAC Co-chair; and Liora Bram, SEPAC Co-Chair.

2. Public Comment: n/a

3. General Business:  
A. SEPAC Update: Heather Nadeau and Liora Bram, Co-Chairs of SEPAC

2021 Highlights -

- Re-engage parent community through Facebook and shared Google Drive

- Active and engaging meetings and presentations - Special Education Law for the Non Lawyer, Transitions services, mediation
- Dyslexia Awareness Month
- Everyday Heroes Awards May 2021 - 72 total nominations

#### Key Parent Concerns / 2022 Focus

- Reading instruction continues to be a hot button. Lisa Rice gave a presentation to the SEPAC Group and was able to address many of the parent questions and concerns.
- Inclusion - especially in Middle School / High School
- Social Emotional Learning
- Teacher Training

SEPAC appreciates the collaborative partnership with the Special Education Department. Laura Often asked what is coming up for SEPAC and how the district can help communicate to families. Heather Nadeau discussed the reading supports that are in place and that will continue to help special education families. Liora Bram said that it is very different for families depending on the nature of the diagnosis. Liz Spinney asked if they hear from parents who don't qualify for services or an IEP. Yes, occasionally. SEPAC is generally able to steer them in the right direction to get answers. The Committee thanked them for their work and their efforts to make SEPAC accessible for all.

#### B. MSS/NSS Update - Joanne Stocklin, MSES and Stephen Wiltshire, NSES

##### Highlights:

- Appreciation - students, community, teachers and staff work together as team
- Connection - pandemic has brought NSS and MSS closer together. Reconnecting teachers and students back to the building since they were remote last year.
- Community Building - band was restarted, student council, GHS/GMS Ambassadors, enrichment programming, schools service groups, PTG, student recognition

##### Focus Areas:

- Counseling - the addition of counseling support has had an immeasurable impact on our students. Full time adjustment counselors have supported families and staff in navigating this difficult year. Highlights include reconnecting families to the school, RTI support in SST meetings, Special Education / 504 / BCAP collaboration with school psychologists, connecting with outside supports like SYFS, and providing Tier 1 support to all students.
- Coaching - what is the data telling us since our return to full in person? Maximizing Teacher Leadership through assessment, teacher supports, professional development, student supports and special education supports. The biggest gap for students has been with stamina and in math.
- Academic vision - where are we currently with literacy and mathematics? Connection between schools will create consistency. Schools are both using Envisions, Foundations, writing alignment with 6th grade to the middle school, aligning assessments and SPED/RTI programming to enhance instruction and options.

- SEL Practices - a continued focus on our students' social and emotional needs. Schools are working to develop a sense of belonging and purpose through equity, inclusion, acceptance, diversity and purpose.

Jennifer Connelly is pleased to see the positive results of the new adjustment counselors. She also likes the bridging happening between 6,7 and 8th grades as well as the efforts in SEL. Liz Spinney asked which things are difficult to replicate in the pandemic. Steve Wiltshire says that they have not been able to replicate the all-school assemblies that they previously enjoyed. They are working with the performing arts teachers about a Spring concert. The school committee thanked the principals for their hard work in supporting staff, students and families.

#### C. District Update /FY23 Budget Update:

Dr. Cummings shared pictures of some of the great things that are happening in the district: classroom activities, sports highlights and for the first time in traffic duty history, a student brought him a hot chocolate. GMS kicked off the *Embracing our Differences, Changing our World* initiative. Jack Savage, 9th grader, participated in a program with Holy Cross football team and signed a letter of intent as a part of their team. South Grafton Elementary School, Doreen Parker, will be retiring after 37 years in the district. Doreen has been a teacher, assistant principal and principal in Grafton.

#### COVID-19

- Significant increase in cases at all schools
- Averaging 15% staff / student absences daily
- DESE extended mask mandate through February
- GPS staff vaccination policy
- Updated DESE protocols received on December 30
- Challenging to understand and communicate DESE protocols - waiting on next round of state updates to push out additional information

Liz Spinney asked if the new vaccination policy resulted in learning that more were vaccinated than previously known. Yes, more people were vaccinated. Jennifer Connelly asked if any modifications are being made in the classroom to reduce group work or increase social distance. Not really. Laura Often asked if there are any plans to cancel school or move to remote learning. No, DESE has been clear about prioritizing in school schooling. DESE is not allowing remote instruction. Liz Spinney asked how long students are out when quarantining/isolating. Students are out for an average of 5 days. The district is anticipating that families with immunocompromised students will keep their students home and the district is working to address that. Amy Marr asked about absenteeism/truancy. The district believes that COVID truancy will be forgiven.

The district is continuing to advocate for the GMS HVAC proposal using 1.9 million of ARPA funds. MassCor Industries has expanded their services to include refurbishing auditoriums. They toured the GMS auditorium and will provide a quote for the project.

Security upgrades are possible through \$120,000 in state funding. Liz Spinney will draft a thank you letter to state representatives for their support of the security upgrade funding. What will the security upgrades include? The upgrades will include updating security cameras and increasing the number of swipe access entry points in the schools.

#### Buildings and Grounds Update

Logo Removal - MassCor is preparing a quote to replace 21 banners at GHS as well as the GMS gym wall padding, GMS Indian head on the gym floor at GMS is scheduled to be removed in Summer 2022. A few remaining signs (field use, championship team signs) and the GMS concrete Indian heads on the outside of the library are on the list as well. Liz Spinney asked if removing these things is necessary. The removal of the concrete Indian head may be something that the committee debates at a later date.

#### Approved/Funded Capital Projects:

- Handicap parking at MSS will be done this summer, possibility over April break
- Fridge replacement at SGES, unit ordered on July 1 with a 12 week delivery window, still waiting for it to arrive, plan is to replace in summer
- Plumbing repairs have been completed
- Flooring replacement at MSS has been completed
- Tractor has been received and is in use
- Playground SGES - were hoping to pair with ADA grant but did not receive the grant. Project will take place over the summer and include paving and accessibility ramp.

The FY23 Preliminary budget for schools is \$42.4 million. Still pending: town funding, FY23 state budget, additional federal funding, COVID and grant funding

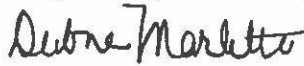
D. Resignation: Laura Often made a motion to accept Rahul Rathi's resignation. Liz Spinney seconded the motion. The committee thanked Rahul for his service, especially during a difficult time. By roll call vote, Laura Often, aye; Jennifer Connelly, aye; Liz Spinney, aye and Amy Marr, aye. Motion carried 4-0. The position was posted today. The School Committee will meet with the Select Board on February 1 to fill the position. With Rahul Rathi's resignation, a new rep needs to be appointed to the Tri Comm Committee. Laura Often nominated Liz Spinney to serve on the Budget Tri Comm Committee. Jennifer Connelly seconded the motion. By roll call vote, Laura Often, aye; Jennifer Connelly, aye; Liz Spinney, aye and Amy Marr, aye. Motion carried 4-0.

3. Future Agenda Planning: School Calendar has been added to the 2/8/22 meeting. The February budget hearing will be postponed. Liz Spinney suggested asking the PTG/PTO to attend a future meeting. The district will discuss a K-6 learning update for a future meeting. The superintendent's contract has been added to the 2/25 meeting. Liz Spinney added the annual report to the town for approval at the next meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes: n/a

5. Financial Report:  
A.. Warrant: Liz Spinney made a motion to approve Warrant #29 dated 1/13/22 in the amount of \$208,630.87. Laura Often seconded the motion. By roll call vote, Laura Often, aye; Jennifer Connelly, aye; Liz Spinney, aye and Amy Marr, aye. Motion carried 4-0.
6. Policy: n/a
7. Member Reports: Jennifer Connelly attended the Tri Comm meeting. It was a brief organizational meeting and they will meet again next month. Amy Marr watched the governor's testimony to representatives regarding COVID. He was asked about the Test and Stay program for vaccinated staff and students. It appears to be an area of confusion.
8. Correspondence: n/a
9. Executive Session: n/a
10. Adjournment: Liz Spinney made a motion to adjourn. Laura Often seconded the motion. By roll call vote, Laura Often, aye; Jennifer Connelly, aye; Liz Spinney, aye and Amy Marr, aye. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Debne Marlette  
Recording Secretary